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Item 3 of the provisional agenda*

PROGRAMMING AND COORDINATION MATTERS RELATED TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

Updated information on the status of women in the Secretariat

Report of the Secretary-General

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INTRODUCTION

1. By means of resolution 47/93 of 16 December 1992, the General Assembly urged the Secretary-General to accord greater priority to the recruitment and promotion of women in posts subject to geographical distribution in order to achieve the goals set out in Assembly resolutions 45/125, 45/239 C and 46/100, which call for an overall participation rate of 35 per cent by 1995 and 25 per cent in posts at the D-1 level and above by 1995.

2. The Secretary-General was requested in resolution 47/93 to implement the action programme outlined in his report on the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (A/47/508). The action programme stressed the coordination of recruitment, placement and promotion, the setting of departmental targets for increasing the number of women within departments and increasing their numbers in decision-making posts as well as the accountability of managers. The Secretary-General was further urged in that resolution to use the opportunity offered by the United Nations reorganization process to promote more women into senior-level positions. As in previous resolutions, the Secretary-General was again requested to ensure that a progress report was given to the Commission on the Status of Women at its thirty-seventh session.

3. At the end of the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly, it was agreed that, because of the short interval of time between the end of the regular session of the Assembly and the opening of the Commission on the Status of Women, a brief statistical update on the status of women in the Secretariat would be prepared and a progress report rather than a full report would be presented to the Commission covering the six-month period between June and December 1992.

4. The statistical update is given in section I below. Section II describes events that have taken place since June 1992.

I. STATISTICAL UPDATE

5. In paragraph 3 of the Secretary-General's report (A/47/508) it is stated that the percentage of women in posts subject to geographical distribution was 30.6 per cent in June 1992. During the six months ending 31 December 1992, that figure rose to 30.7 per cent. At the end of December 1992, there were 798 women on posts subject to geographical distribution compared with 1,801 men. Taking language posts into account, the share of posts occupied by women rises to 31.8 per cent.

6. In terms of higher level posts (D-1 level and above), there were 37 women (10.4 per cent) of the total of 356 staff at those levels at the end of June 1992. By 31 December 1992, the number of women in such posts rose to 39 (11.2 per cent) of the total of 348 posts at those levels. Comparable figures in December 1991 were 29.9 per cent overall and 9.3 per cent for posts at the D-1 level and above. The increase in the percentage of women occupying higher level posts during 1991-1992 from 9.3 to 11.2, nearly two percentage points, is significant, but still a long way from the goal of 25 per cent set for 1995. In 1990, women occupied only 6.8 per cent of posts at levels D-1 and above. In 1991, it was reported in document ICSC/37/R.16 that the women in geographical posts at levels P-5 and above in all the organizations in the United Nations system represented 3.6 per cent of the total staff. The comparable figure for the Secretariat of the United Nations was 14.4 per cent. The Secretariat figure for the end of 1992 is 16.6 per cent.

7. The placement and promotion system involving an annual comprehensive grade-by-grade review is in force, but the 1992 exercise is not complete and statistics are not yet available.

8. The number of women recruited into the Secretariat of the United Nations during the calendar year 1992 was 10 compared with 17 men. These figures are far lower than the 44 women and 85 men recruited in 1991 and reflect the suspension of regular recruitment in effect as a result of the ongoing restructuring of the Secretariat.

II. EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES SINCE JUNE 1992

9. In October 1992, the Secretary-General accepted the recommendations contained in the sixth report of the Steering Committee for the Improvement of the Status of Women in the Secretariat. He informed the staff by bulletin ST/SGB/252 of 20 October 1992 that he accepted the recommendations on appointment and promotion procedures and had directed that those be incorporated into administrative instructions which, in turn, would form an integral part of the appointment and promotion process. The measures on promotion and recruitment direct that in departments and offices with less than 35 per cent of women overall, and in those with less than 25 per cent women at levels P-5 and above, vacancies overall, particularly in the latter group, will be filled, when there are one or more female candidates whose qualifications match all the requirements for a vacant post, by one of those female candidates. With regard to recruitment, two exceptions apply. The first is when the post has been vacant for 12 months and despite the best efforts of all concerned it has not been possible to identify or secure a qualified woman, and the second, when the post is being filled through a competitiveness examination.

10. Administrative instruction ST/AI/382 of 3 March 1993 includes the Steering Committee's recommendations on appointment and promotion. In addition, it is stipulated in the instruction that since the current gender distribution within the Secretariat does not provide a sufficient pool of women candidates who could be promoted to higher level posts between now and 1995, effective immediately, qualified women presently in the service of the Organization under any type of appointment, with a good performance record and at least one year's experience in the United Nations system including the United Nations programmes, will be regarded as internal candidates for available professional vacancies. Similar considerations will apply to qualified women serving with specialized agencies and subsidiary organs within the common system.

11. Also in October 1992, circulars on sexual harassment were issued. Those circulars included the Secretary-General's bulletin entitled "Promotion of equal treatment of men and women in the Secretariat and prevention of sexual harassment" (ST/SGB/253 of 29 October 1992), an information circular entitled "Guidelines for promoting equal treatment of men and women in the Secretariat" (ST/IC/1992/67 of 29 October 1992) and an Administrative Instruction entitled "Procedures for dealing with sexual harassment" (ST/A1/379 of 29 October 1992). These circulars were distributed to all Secretariat staff as well as to the Heads of UNICEF, UNFPA, UNRWA, UNDP, UNU and UNHCR, in the belief that these would be of help to them in formulating their own procedures for dealing with the matter. In addition, these circulars were included in the documentation of the recent session of the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (ACC/1993/PER/R.5 of 8 February 1993).

12. In his November 1992 statement to the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly (A/47/508), the Secretary-General referred to the shortage of women in managerial posts and said that he intended to do all he could to bring the balance in policy-level positions as close to parity as possible by 1995. Since then, he has appointed five senior women: three at the Under-Secretary-General level, and two at the Assistant Secretary-General level.

13. At the end of 1992, the Secretary-General asked the Office of Human Resources Management to prepare a plan of action for 1993 and 1994 in the context of improving the status of women in the Secretariat by 1995. Elements of this plan include succession planning, the wide use of advertising vacant posts in professional journals in order to attract qualified women to fill vacant posts, limiting long-term appointments as exceptions to the freeze to women and, in an effort to expand the pool of women at higher levels (P-5 and above), considering women who have served in the system, either in United Nations programmes or in the specialized agencies, as internal candidates for purposes of recruitment provided they meet the geographical and qualification requirements of the vacant posts. The plan also calls for efforts to increase the number of posts available for successful candidates from competitive examinations.

14. On the occasion of International Women's Day (8 March 1993) the Secretary-General, once again, reiterated his personal commitment to improving the gender balance of women and men in the Secretariat by 1995, the year of the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace (1995) and the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. The Secretary-General as well as his senior staff are working towards making the composition of the United Nations reflective of the world. The active cooperation of Member States is crucial to this endeavour.

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PROGRAMMING AND COORDINATION MATTERS RELATED TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

Proposed programme of work of the Division for the Advancement of Women for the biennium 1994-1995

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

In regulation 3.1 and rules 103.2, 103.3 and 103.6 of the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, the intergovernmental body concerned with specific programmes is requested to provide comments on the proposed work programme for the next biennium. The note contains initital proposals being considered by the Secretary-General for incorporation in his programme budget for the period 1994-1995. The Commission is requested to make any comments that it feels might need to be taken into account by the Secretary-General in preparing his submission to the General Assembly.

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1. The Commission on the Status of Women may wish to review the proposed programme of work on the advancement of women and provide its comments to the Secretary-General. It should be borne in mind that, in accordance with the terms of regulation 3.1 and rules 103.2, 103.3, 103.5 and 103.6 of the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, while the suggestions or recommendations on the substance of the work programme by the intergovernmental body concerned may be taken into account in the course of the preparation and review of the programme budget, the Secretary-General cannot commit himself to the adoption of such suggestions or recommendations before the completion of the proposed programme budget.

2. The proposed programme of work contained in the annex is submitted in accordance with the relevant regulations and rules governing programme planning (ST/SGB/PPBME/Rules/1 (1987)). It is based on the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997, 1/ as revised and adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 47/214.

3. The programme for the advancement of women is based on the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women 2/ up to the year 2000. The work for the biennium 1994-1995 is governed by the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 1/ and contains only output that has been explicitly mandated by recent resolutions or by the Forward-looking Strategies. The format of the proposed programme of work is in line with the new framework set out in the medium-term plan. The Commission may wish to note that under the new procedure established for priority-setting, priorities for the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 will be set at the output/services level.

4. Under the programme of work for the biennium 1994-1995, implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and various articles of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex) will continue with the servicing of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. During the biennium 1994-1995, greater substantive support will continue to be given to the Committee and the quality of the studies for the selected priority themes for the Commission will be strengthened with the extensive use of expert group meetings. Attention will continue to be paid to providing advisory and information services to Governments, in terms of strengthening national machinery for the advancement of women and improving national reports submitted for consideration by the Committee. The dominant priority of the biennium will be to assist national preparatory bodies in their preparation for the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held at Beijing in September 1995, to coordinate the regional preparatory bodies for the World Conference and other international and world conferences held to promote the World Conference, and to service the Conference and its international preparations.

5. Bearing in mind this information, the Commission may wish to comment on the proposed programme of work and proposed priorities of the Division for the Advancement of Women for the biennium 1994-1995.

Notes

1/ Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15-26 July 1985 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap. I, sect. A.

2/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/45/6/Rev.1), vol. II, Programme 27.

Annex

PROPOSED PROGRAMME OF WORK OF THE DIVISION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN FOR THE BIENNIUM 1994-1995

A. Subprogramme 1. Equality

1. Orientation

1. Particular efforts will be made to improve support to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women by increasing the quantity of analysis presented to the Committee. Much of this analysis will be reflected in a new version of the Committee's report to the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace on the achievements of and obstacles encountered by States parties in the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex), which will be submitted to the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace. For the Commission on the Status of Women, work on priority themes will centre on the effectiveness of affirmative action measures on achievement of economic equality through the application of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value and equality in economic decision-making. The analysis of the work for the Committee will be linked to the work on the priority themes for the Commission. Operational activities will centre on assisting States Parties to the Convention in preparing periodic reports and in training at the subregional level in the implementation of the Convention.

2. Activities

2. The activities to be undertaken by the Division will consist of:

(a) A substantive output, namely, the drafting of the following documents:

(i) Reports to the General Assembly on the Status of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (two reports, 1994 and 1995);

(ii) Reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women containing a separate analysis of initial and periodic reports by States Parties to the Convention being presented to the Committee (20 reports, 1994 and 1995) and an identification of trends in the implementation of articles 7 and 8 of the Convention (1994) and other specific articles to be decided on (1995), and a report on the implications of priority theme analyses prepared for the Commission on the Status of Women for the work of the Committee (four reports, 1994 and 1995);

(iii) Reports to the Commission on the Status of Women on the list of confidential and non-confidential communications relating to the status of women (1994 and 1995), on equal pay for work of equal value, including methodologies for measurement of pay inequities and work in the informal sector 1994), and on equality in economic decision-making (1995);

(iv) Report to the Fourth World Conference on Women on the achievements of and obstacles encountered by States parties in implementing the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (1995);

(b) Substantive services will be provided:

(i) To the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (annual: 1994, 1995);

(ii) To the Commission on the Status of Women (annual: 1994, 1995);

(c) Technical (secretariat) services will be provided:

(i) To the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (annual: 1994, 1995);

(ii) To the Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (biennial: 1994);

(d) Ad hoc expert group meetings will be organized and related preparatory work carried out as follows:

(i) An ad hoc expert group meeting on women and equality in economic decision-making will be held (1994) and a Secretariat background paper will be produced on the same subject (1994);

(ii) An ad hoc expert group meeting on the elimination of stereotyping of women in the mass media will be held (1995) (extrabudgetary) and a Secretariat background paper will be produced on the subject (1995).

3. Published material

3. The following recurrent publication will be produced: The Work of CEDAW (annual, 1994, 1995) (extrabudgetary).

4. Operational activities

4. The Division's operational activities will consist of:

(a) Advisory services, in the form of advisory missions to nine countries on the preparation of periodic reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (1994, 1995) (extrabudgetary);

(b) Group training consisting of two subregional seminars on the Convention (1994, 1995) (extrabudgetary).

B. Subprogramme 2. Development

1. Orientation

5. The priority themes for the Commission on the Status of Women under the heading "Development" are the promotion of literacy, education and training, as well as the condition of women in urban areas. Emphasis will be on the preparations for the 1994 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development and

an in-depth analysis of development issues as part of the preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women. Operational activities will focus on helping national systems to play their full role in ensuring that women's concerns are part of the mainstream development efforts and will be increased over the biennium as part of the preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women.

2. Activities

6. The activities to be undertaken by the Division will consist of:

(a) A substantive output, namely, the drafting of the following documents:

(i) Reports to the General Assembly, through the Commission on the Status of Women and the Economic and Social Council, on the 1994 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development (1994), and, through the Economic and Social Council, on effective mobilization for women in development (1995);

(ii) Reports to the Commission on the Status of Women on women in urban areas: population, nutrition and health factors for women in development, including migration, drug consumption and the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (1994), and on the promotion of literacy, education and training, including technological skills (1995);

(b) Substantive services will be provided:

(i) To the Commission on the Status of Women (annual: 1994, 1995);

(ii) To the Economic and Social Council (biennial: 1995);

(iii) To the General Assembly (biennial: 1994);

(c) Ad hoc expert group meetings will be organized and related preparatory work carried out as follows:

(i) An ad hoc expert group meeting on the promotion of literacy, education and training, including technological skills will be held (1994) (extrabudgetary) and a Secretariat background paper will be produced on the subject (1994);

(ii) An ad hoc expert group meeting on child and dependant care, including sharing of work and family responsibilities will be held (1995) (extrabudgetary) and a Secretariat background paper will be produced on the subject (1995);

(iii) An ad hoc expert group meeting on caring and crisis situation: women and AIDS will be held (1995) (extrabudgetary) and a Secretariat background paper will be produced on the subject (1995).

3. Operational activities

7. The Division's operational activities will consist of advisory missions to nine countries on the strengthening of national machinery (1994, 1995) (extrabudgetary).

C. Subprogramme 3. Peace

1. Orientation

8. The establishment of measures to eradicate violence against women and the full participation of women in international decision-making are the priority themes for the Commission on the Status of Women under the heading "Peace". For this, the database on women in government decision-making will be updated and revised statistics published. Efforts will be made to articulate women's point of view on current issues of global governance.

2. Activities

9. The activities to be undertaken by the Division will consist of:

(a) A substantive output, namely, the drafting of reports to the Commission on the Status of Women on measures to eradicate violence against women in the family and society (1994), on women in international decision-making (1995), on the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women (1994, 1995), and on women and children under apartheid (1994, 1995);

(b) Substantive services will be provided to the Commission on the Status of Women (annual: 1994, 1995);

(c) An ad hoc expert group meeting will be held on women in international decision-making (1994) and a Secretariat background paper will be produced on the subject (1994).

3. Published material

10. The following technical material will be produced: an update of the database on women in decision-making positions (1994).

D. Subprogramme 4. Monitoring, review and appraisal of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women

1. Orientation

11. Work will be centred on the preparations for and immediate follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, including the review and appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies and servicing of the intergovernmental preparatory bodies for the World Conference. Monitoring of the implementation of the Strategies by the organizations of the United Nations system will continue. An effort will be made to increase the amount and quality of public information on the work of the United Nations for the advancement of women by improving existing publications and their distribution.

2. Activities

12. The activities to be undertaken by the Division will consist of:

(a) International cooperation, namely:

(i) Liaison with a network of non-governmental organizations concerned with advancement of women, including the Vienna, Geneva and New York NGO Committees (1994, 1995);

(ii) Provision of substantive support to meetings of non-governmental organizations that take place at the time of annual sessions of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Commission on the Status of Women, as well as in preparations for the NGO Forum to be held at Beijing in connection with the Fourth World Conference on Women (1994, 1995);

(iii) Provision of support to the NGO Forum (1995);

(b) Substantive output, namely, the drafting of the following documents:

(i) Reports to the General Assembly on the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies (1994, 1995);

(ii) Reports to the Commission on the Status of Women on the system-wide monitoring of progress in the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking strategies (1994), and on the preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women (1994, 1995), and draft rules of procedure for the Fourth World Conference on Women (1994);

(iii) Documents for the Fourth World Conference on Women, namely: a report of the Secretary-General on the second review and appraisal of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, a draft final document on the Platform for Action (1995), an update of The World's Women: Trends and Statistics (1995), a report of the Secretary-General on the outcome of regional preparatory meetings for the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), and reports on relevant sections of final documents emanating from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the World Conference on Human Rights and the International Conference on Population and Development (1995);

(c) Substantive services will be provided:

(i) To the General Assembly (annual: 1994, 1995);

(ii) To the Economic and Social Council (annual: 1994, 1995);

(iii) To the Commission on the Status of Women (annual: 1994, 1995);

(iv) To the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995).

3. Published material

13. The Division will produce:

(a) The following recurrent publications:

(i) Directory of Focal Points within the United Nations System on Questions Relating to Women (1994);

(ii) Directory of National Machinery for the Advancement of Women (1994, 1995);

(iii) Women 2000 (four in 1994 and 1995);

(iv) Conference 95 (two in 1994 and 1995);

(v) Women's Information System (WIS) accessions list (two in 1994 and 1995);

(b) The following technical material:

(i) An update of WIS computer software (1995) (extrabudgetary);

(ii) Technical services to the annual interagency meetings on women of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, including the preparation of background papers and the reports of the meetings (1994, 1995);

(iii) Coordination with national and regional preparatory activities for the World Conference on Women (1994);

(iv) Coordination with other international and world conferences and events to promote the World Conference on Women in 1995, for example the International Conference on Population and Development (1994), the International Year of the Family (1994) and the World Summit for Social Development (1995);

(v) Coordination with the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat and other statistical offices in preparing statistical indicators for the second review and appraisal of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and The World's Women: Trends and Statistics (1994, 1995).